

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1007

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Urging the United States Department of Agriculture to implement country of origin labeling for beef.

WHEREAS, mandatory country of origin labeling for beef allows consumers to make a distinction between beef products derived from animals exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States and similar imported products. This differentiation will also enable consumers to exercise their option to choose between purchasing domestic or imported products; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture may promulgate rules that will place an undue burden on United States cattle producers and add unnecessary complexity to the logistical process of labeling beef products with their country of origin; and

WHEREAS, because no live animal processed in the United States may be disqualified from the United States label unless it has been imported from another country, the United States Department of Agriculture should design a system that requires all handlers of imported cattle to retain the animal's import documentation throughout the animal's life. Handlers of imported cattle should further be required to disclose and transfer the animal's accompanying import documentation to each buyer; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture should define the lack of import documentation as proof of exclusive domestic origin; and

WHEREAS, under this proposal, no new record keeping system would be necessary to accurately identify cattle eligible for the United States label. In addition, the proposal would require only the retention of existing records kept on imported cattle in order to determine the proper origin of beef derived from imported cattle; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture should consider existing meat segregation models as recommended by Congress to maintain the proper label on all imported cattle and meat processed by United States meat packing plants and distributed to United States retailers; and

WHEREAS, requiring labeling on all meats and livestock that enter this country would eliminate the need for costly and unnecessary records by United States producers to individually identify domestically produced livestock; and

WHEREAS, too many unrealistic and unnecessary regulations could create more of a burden than a benefit for United States livestock producers. Such an action would be detrimental to South Dakota's agricultural industry and to United States consumers who want to purchase United States beef:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-eighth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the South Dakota Legislature urge the United States Department of Agriculture to work to capture both the Congressional spirit and intent of mandatory country of origin labeling through the promulgation of rules that maximize benefits to both United States producers and consumers while minimizing costs to producers, processors, and retailers.

Adopted by the House of Representatives,
Concurred in by the Senate,

February 11, 2003
February 18, 2003

Matthew Michels
Speaker of the House

Karen Gerdes
Chief Clerk of the House

Dennis Daugaard
President of the Senate

Patricia Adam
Secretary of the Senate